

Monastic Tradition and Lay Practice from the Perspective of Nantenbō

A Response of Japanese Zen Buddhism to Modernity

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Although the political transformations and conflicts that marked the Meiji Restoration have received much attention, there are still significant gaps in our knowledge of the evolution that affected Japanese Zen Buddhism during the nineteenth century. Simultaneously, from a historical perspective, the current debate about the significance of modernity and modernization shows that the very idea of “modernity” implies often ideologically charged presuppositions, which must be taken into account in our review of the Zen Buddhist milieu. Moreover, before we attempt to draw conclusions on the nature of modernization as a whole, it would seem imperative to survey a wider field, especially other religious movements.

The purpose of this paper is to provide selected samples of the thought of a Meiji Zen Buddhist leader and to analyze them in terms of the evolution of the Rinzai school from the Tokugawa period to the present. I shall first situate Nantenbō 南天棒 by looking at his biography, and then examine a reform project he proposed in 1893. This is followed by a consideration of the nationalist dimension of Nantenbō's thought and his view of lay practice. Owing to space limitations, this study is confined to the example provided by Nantenbō and his acquaintances and disciples. I must specify that, at this stage, I do not pretend to present new information on this priest. I rely on the published sources, although a lot remains to be done at the level of fundamental research and the gathering of documents. To my knowledge, no academic work has yet tackled the actual role played by Nantenbō. The issues that will be considered here should naturally be extended to the Sōtō and Ōbaku schools, or be enlarged to encompass Buddhism as a whole and its interactions with other religious movements, but I believe that there is still

an enormous need for raw data and specific information.

The testimony Nantenbō provides in his writings shows above all the diversity in the thought in Meiji Buddhists. A study of their ideas should therefore help us to recognize that their attitudes toward modernity would be oversimplified if we assume that they agreed on most problems. But who was Nantenbō, and where resides the interest of this character for our discussion of modernity?

Name and Profile of Nantenbō

Nantenbō literally designates “a stick (made of) nantin,”¹ a kind of evergreen shrub; the nickname of the Rinzai priest Tōjū Zenchū 鄧州全忠 (Nakahara 中原 1839–1925),² it was the sobriquet Nantenbō used when referring to himself. Nantenbō recalls how, during one of his trips in the Kyūshū area, he happened to see an exceptional tree, which looked as if it were wriggling out of a cowshed. Struck by the sight, he asked the farmer to cut it, and used this piece of wood as his favorite stick. As the stick Nantenbō carried throughout his life, it became a symbol of his spirited attempt to revive the Rinzai school.³

This unconventional character can hardly be considered the most representative figure of the Meiji Rinzai school; however, as one of the teachers who experienced the transition from the Tokugawa regime to the Meiji government, and as a plainspoken—sometimes naive—writer, he eloquently embodies some of the typical contradictions of his time. Furthermore, his role in training hundreds of lay practitioners cannot be overlooked, nor can his collaboration with Yamaoka Tesshū 山岡鉄舟 (1836–1888) to establish the first monastery in Tokyo, the Dōrin-ji 道林寺 of Ichigaya, officially rec-

¹ *Nandina domestica* (Kōdansha's *Japan: An Illustrated Encyclopedia*, p. 1049a).

² For the names of Japanese priests who are not alive today, I have adopted the convention, favored in most Japanese publications, of giving first the surname (*dōgō* 道号 or *azana* 字), followed by the ordination name (*hōki* 法諱). The family name and the dates follow within brackets. Nantenbō's surname is occasionally read Tōshū instead of Tōjū; his consultation-chamber name (*shitsugō* 室号) is Hakugaikutsu 白崖窟. Nantenbō's names are all related to the Chinese master Huizhong 慧忠 (d. 776), who is depicted as having remained for forty years in the Valley of Dangzi 穰子谷 on Mount Baiya 白崖山, west of the district of Nanyang 南陽 in the region of Deng 鄧州 (in modern Henan Prefecture), where he founded the Xiangyan si 香嚴寺. The stūpa Nantenbō built for his own relics when he was still alive, at Kaisei-ji 海清寺 in Nishinomiya (largely destroyed by the January 1995 earthquake), is named Nan'yō-tō 南陽塔.

³ This episode is narrated by Nantenbō himself (NAKAHARA 1984: 143–46). The actual stick, technically called a *shippei* 竹篋, is kept at the Zuigan-ji Museum of Matsushima. See the picture in ZUIGAN-JI HAKUBUTSUKAN 1986, p. 18 and ZENBUNKA HENSHŪBU 1981, p. 199.

ognized by Myōshin-ji in 1887.⁴ Nantenbō and his followers' activity can be considered complementary to the efforts made by the teachers of the Engaku-ji line of Kamakura, although the implicit rivalry between the two lineages has been partially overshadowed by the "success story" of Suzuki Daisetsu (1870–1966), who was instrumental in introducing Rinzai teachings to the West.

A Landmark in Rinzai History

I should say here that my choice of Nantenbō rather than of another teacher has been motivated by his fortuitous position as a landmark in Rinzai history, rather than by a fascination with his personality. Nantenbō is known in particular for his pledge to ensure that his fellow certified masters (*rōshi* 老師) had all reached genuine spiritual attainment; on the occasion of the formal assembly at Myōshin-ji on 1 May 1893 he boldly proposed a ruling that would have compelled all recognized *rōshi* to undertake an examination ascertaining the level of their realization (*shūshō kentei hō* 宗匠検定法).

The timing of this proposal is particularly interesting. It was made almost one century after the death of most of Hakuin's major disciples: Daishū Zenjo 提洲禅怒 (1720–1778), Shikyō Eryō 斯經慧梁 (1722–1787), Suiō Genro 遂翁元廬 (1717–1790), Tōrei Enji 東嶺円慈 (1721–1792), Gasan Jitō 峨山慈棹 (1727–1797) and Tairei Shōkan 太霊紹鑑 (1724–1807). The commitment of Nantenbō to establish a Zen monastery in Tokyo was inspired precisely by the efforts made a century earlier by Shikyō Eryō to create a "monastery open to anyone" (*gōko dōjō* 江湖道場): Enpuku-ji 円福寺, in Yawata 八幡 south of Kyoto. Nantenbō spent his first years of monastic practice at Enpuku-ji and was galvanized by the example of Shikyō Eryō, who had managed to overcome the inertia of Myōshin-ji and to inaugurate the first official monastery of this branch of the Rinzai school.⁵

Nantenbō's 1893 proposal came at a time when freedom of religion had already been recognized (1877) and the "worst of the storm" aimed at eradicating Buddhism was passing (COLLCUTT 1986, p. 167). In the international sphere, it happened a few months before the first World's Parliament of

⁴ *Nantenbō angyaroku* (NAKAHARA 1984, p. 218). This temple does not exist anymore.

⁵ The official recognition of the Enpuku-ji monastery by the authorities of Myōshin-ji came only in 1769 (KATŌ 1969, p. 261). Monasteries affiliated with Tenryū-ji, Shōkoku-ji, and Nanzen-ji had already been established a few years before. The complex story of the foundation of the Enpuku-ji monastery is meticulously discussed in KATŌ 1969.

error
in Katō

1787

simply means
sōdō? cf. Z6D
article sōdō

in KSZR he says that only priests
of the Kanzanha can become priests.

Religions, which opened in Chicago on 11 September with Kōgaku Sōen 洪岳宗演 (Shaku 釈 1860–1919) presenting a Rinzai Zen with a slightly different flavor.⁶

From today's perspective, Nantenbō's project is a convenient marker and evidence for the need for reform. An examination of Nantenbō's activity therefore provides us with an intermediate period between the post-Hakuin Rinzai school and today's Rinzai-shū, helping us to understand the development of the Rinzai world during the rather ill-defined last third of the Tokugawa period. The Restoration brought drastic changes in the whole political and social system, involving the official abolition of castes (although retaining some privileges for the nobility), and a thorough revision of the educational system, but did these changes affect the conception of spiritual training as it appears in Nantenbō's thought?

Among the questions raised by Nantenbō's endeavor, one can ask whether his project was a reaction to the widespread degradation in the standards for Zen practice, or whether it was a desperate attempt by an old-fashioned priest to fight the characteristic Meiji inclination toward novelty. We shall return to the contents of his 1893 proposal. Let us first take a brief look at his biography.

Sources

Besides Nantenbō's own autobiographical accounts, found in particular in his memoirs *Nantenbō angyaroku* 南天棒行脚録, written at the age of eighty-two,⁷ the earliest source for his biography is the *Zoku Kinsei zenrin sōbōden* 続近世禅林僧宝伝 (1926) by Gyokugen Buntei 玉鉉文鼎 (Obata 小島 1870–1945), published a year after Nantenbō's death. This is, however, largely uncritical and apparently relies almost entirely on Nantenbō's own accounts.

Further information appears in the work of Ogisu Jundō 荻須純道 (1907–1986), which briefly discusses Nantenbō's proposal as related in Myōshin-ji's periodical *Shōbōrin* 正法輪.⁸ Without questioning Ogisu's contribution to his-

⁶ The young Suzuki Daisetsu translated into English the speech of Kōgaku Sōen (AKIZUKI 1967, pp. 30, 221). Concerning the implications of this conference, see ELIADE and KITAGAWA 1959, FADER 1982, and KETELAAR 1990, pp. 136–73. The translated paper was read by the chairman, and was recently published in YOKOYAMA 1993 (pp. 131–37).

⁷ NAKAHARA 1984. The age of redaction is mentioned on page 24. As usual, Nantenbō recounts his years of age according to the traditional system in which a person is already one year of age at birth (*kazuredoshi* 数え年).

⁸ OGISU 1975, pp. 787–88.

torical studies of the Rinzai sect, I must mention parenthetically that, as a Myōshin-ji priest, he is hardly in a position of optimum objectivity with regard to his own school. This is illustrated by some of his writings during the war,⁹ which, alas, were no different from those of most contemporaries. More recent publications generally reiterate similar anecdotes and describe Nantenbō's biography along the same lines.¹⁰

Elements for a Biography

Given the scarcity of accounts from outside of Rinzai circles, it appears necessary to present first a factual summary of Nantenbō's life. He was born on 15 May 1839 in the port town of Karatsu 唐津, Kamimatsuura 上松浦 District in the domain of Hizen 肥前 (present Saga Prefecture in northern Kyūshū), ruled by the Ogasawara 小笠原 family. His father, whose name was Shioda Daisuke 塩田大助 and later Shioda Juhee Koregasu 塩田寿兵衛惟和, used to be a retainer of the daimyō. Nantenbō's first given name was Keisuke 慶助, but his father decided to change his name to Kōjirō 孝治郎 in praise of his filial piety.¹¹ A decisive event marked his childhood: the loss of his mother Kitako 喜多子 at the age of seven. The distress he felt is reflected in his memories of going every day during the following years to pay his respects in front of her grave; Nantenbō presents his desire to strive for the salvation (*bodai* 菩提) of his deceased mother as the prime motivation that brought him into religion when he was eleven (NAKAHARA 1984, pp. 20–21).

On 23 October 1849 he was ordained by a priest named Reisō Zentaku 麗宗大沢 (1818–1878)¹² at Yūkō-ji 雄香寺 in Hirado and received the new ordination name of Zenchū. The family name Nakahara was later bestowed on him in 1872 by Mōri Motoshige 毛利元藩.¹³ At eighteen, after the usual

⁹ See for example OGISU 1943 and other articles by him in the same review.

¹⁰ This is the case with KISHIDA (1973 and 1994) and KASUMI (1963 and 1974).

¹¹ NAKAHARA 1917.10 (p. 297) and 1984 (pp. 75, 143). The childhood name of Nantenbō, Kōjirō, is written 孝治郎 in NAKAHARA 1917.10 (p. 297) while other accounts use the characters 孝次郎. Since KSBD (vol. 2, p. 495) reports that "he was the third child" of the family, I have followed the former.

¹² For the reading of this priest's surname I followed NAKAHARA 1917.10 (p. 298); more recent publications give the reading Reijū (NAKAHARA 1984, p. 21). This is the only source I could find for this priest (NAKAHARA 1984, p. 162); here Nantenbō mentions the date of his death, his age, and the fact that he was a successor of Bannei Gen'i 万寧玄叟 (1790–1860).

¹³ NAKAHARA 1917.10, p. 301, and 1984, p. 140.

years of apprenticeship, Nantenbō left Reisō and started his spiritual pilgrimage (*angya* 行脚). Using the postal boat that was going to Osaka, it took him no less than thirty days to reach the Kansai area, where he headed straight for Enpuku-ji monastery.

His first master was Sekiō Sōmin 石応宗珉 (1795–1857), a direct successor of Takujū Kosen 卓洲胡僊 (1760–1833). Nantenbō recalls how during this inaugural winter in the monastery he danced for joy on the last day of the *rōhatsu sesshin* after breaking through the *kōan mu* (ibid. p. 39). This marks the beginning of another nine years of strenuous effort under the guidance of several teachers, which led to his certification by Razan Genma 羅山元磨 (1815–1867) at the age of twenty-seven (ibid. pp. 93–94). This early recognition could have been a reason for more rejoicing, but when he recounts this event in his memoirs with the mature eye of an old man, Nantenbō remarks:

The *inka* (received) just after completing the formal *kōan* training is not true. Let us leave now the rationalization for later on, but get to work on what is truly alive! (ibid. p. 93)

This second major turning point in Nantenbō's life was also an occasion for him to reflect upon the guidance he had received from the teachers consulted during his years as a wandering monk. For him, one of the main reasons for the lack of vitality he found in the Rinzai school was one of the “ten afflictions” already denounced by the Chinese master Xutang Zhiyu 虛堂智愚 (1185–1269) when he said, “The illness resides in [having only] one master and one [spiritual] friend” (*yamai wa isshi ichiyū no tokoro ni ari* 病在一師一友處).¹⁴

Masters consulted

Resolved not to commit this mistake, Nantenbō consulted no less than twenty-four teachers from both the Inzan and Takujū lineages. As this represents an important source of information concerning both his choices and the masters active during his time, I have tried to identify each of them. Below I give their affiliations in brackets.¹⁵ Next, I indicate the number of years Nantenbō spent with that teacher; the “duration of an assembly” (*daiechū* 大会中) usually corresponds to a few weeks, while the “duration of a retreat” (*kesseichū*

¹⁴ *Xutanglu* 虛堂錄 4, T 47 no. 2000, p. 1014a14. Mentioned in NAKAHARA 1984 (p. 146).

¹⁵ This list is based on NAKAHARA 1984 (pp. 147–48); also in NAKAHARA 1985 (pp. 123–25).

結制中) is generally equivalent to ninety days.

1. Sekiō Sōmin (Takujū, 2 years)¹⁶
2. Bannei Gen'i 万寧玄集 (1790–1860, Inzan, duration of an assembly)¹⁷
3. Tōin Shōsen 韜因紹瑄 (1787–1859, not specified, duration of an assembly)¹⁸
4. Ryōsui Eigyō 龍水英堯 (1857–1934, Inzan, duration of a retreat)
5. Isan Soan 伊山祖安 (1788–1864, Inzan, duration of a retreat)¹⁹
6. Sekkō Shijun 雪航孜純 (1806–1871, Takujū, duration of a retreat)²⁰
7. Seijō Genshi 星定元志 (1816–1881, Takujū, duration of a retreat)²¹
8. Tankai Genshō 潭海玄昌 (1812–1898, Takujū, at Myōshin-ji)²²
9. Kaijū Sotō 海州楚棟 (1808–1878, Takujū, while staying at Enpuku-ji)²³
10. Satsumon Sōon 薩門宗溫 (1805–1871, Takujū, while staying at Enpuku-ji)²⁴
11. Sozan Genkyō 蘇山玄喬 (1799–1869, Takujū, 3 years)²⁵
12. Zuidō Zenri 瑞道全履 (1803–1874, Inzan, on the occasion of the great commemoration of the founder at Myōshin-ji)²⁶
13. Renjū 廉州 or 廉洲 (unidentified, during the assembly at Dōmyō-ji)²⁷
14. Raiō Bunjō 賴翁文靜 (1799–1871, line of Suiō Genro, 3 years in the

¹⁶ KSBD, vol. 1, pp. 261–63; ZGD, p. 755c.

¹⁷ KSBD, vol. 1, pp. 246–47; ZGD, p. 276d; NBYJ, p. 683b.

¹⁸ The second character of his surname is wrongly given as Tōin 韜隱 in NAKAHARA (1984, p. 146). KSBD, vol. 2, pp. 491–92.

¹⁹ Concerning the affiliation of Ian, Nakahara gives his line as being Takujū's (1984, p. 147), but all other evidence shows that he was in Inzan's line, as he inherited the Dharma from Sekkan Shōju 雪関紹珠 (1766–1835), one of the four main successors of Inzan. KSBD, vol. 1, pp. 140–43; ZGD, p. 552b.

²⁰ KSBD, vol. 1, pp. 264–66; ZGD, p. 435c–d.

²¹ KSBD, vol. 1, pp. 266–68; ZGD, 283b–c; NBYJ, p. 422a.

²² KSBD, vol. 3, pp. 175–80; ZGD, pp. 287d–88a; MZS, pp. 47–66; NBYJ, p. 510a.

²³ KSBD, vol. 1, pp. 248–53; ZGD, 774c; NBYJ, pp. 97b–98a.

²⁴ KSBD, vol. 1, pp. 278–79; ZGD, p. 716a; NBYJ, p. 228b.

²⁵ KSBD, vol. 1, pp. 224–32; ZGD, p. 279a–b; NBYJ, p. 461a–b.

²⁶ KSBD, vol. 3, pp. 29–37; ZGD, p. 707c–d.

²⁷ The passage mentioning this priest speaks of the opening ceremony (*shokaidō* 初開堂) held in 1860 at Dōmyō-ji 洞明寺, in Kiribatake 切畑, Bungo 豊後 Domain in Kyūshū (NAKAHARA 1984, p. 55). On the Dharma-lineage chart of the ZGD (number 49–03), he is presented as a successor of Shunsō Shōju 春叢紹珠 (1751–1835), in the line of Suiō Genro 遂翁元廬 (1717–1790).

- intervals between the retreats at Bairin-ji)²⁸
15. Razan Genma (Takujū, 8 years)²⁹
 16. Mugaku Bun'eki 無学文奕 (1818–1898, Takujū, 1 year)³⁰
 17. Gōten Dōkai 鰲巔道契 (1814–1891, Takujū, during the assembly at Kenshō-ji)³¹
 18. Ian Soken 惟庵祖権 (1810–1880, line unknown, during the assembly at Tōkō-ji)³²
 19. Gukei Jitetsu 愚溪自哲 (1820–1885, Takujū, during the memorial ceremony at Shōfuku-ji)³³
 20. Bāō Sozen 馬庇祖臚 (1812–1880, Takujū, while staying at Bairin-ji)³⁴
 21. Kazan Zenryō 伽山全楞 (1824–1893, Takujū, while staying at Chōfuku-ji)³⁵
 22. Ekkei Shuken 越溪守謙 (1810–1884, Inzan, 1 year while at Myōshin-ji)³⁶
 23. Hogaku Sōju 葆岳宗寿 (1825–1901, Takujū, 1 year)³⁷
 24. Kyōdō Etan 匡道慧潭 (1809–1895, Takujū, while staying at Enpuku-ji)³⁸

The above list reveals something of Nantenbō's background. Although he experienced to a certain extent the style of the Inzan line (particularly through consulting Ekkei Shuken), the influence of the Takujū line appears predominant. The second point that can be noted is that he had no direct

²⁸ KSBD, vol. 3, pp. 15–17; ZGD, p. 1103b. One of his surnames was “the demon Bunjō” (Oni Bunjō 鬼文静) because of his severeness. It should be noted that the second character of the surname Bunjō is wrongly noted 文常 in KSBD and in ZGD. It has been corrected according to the annotation by Katō Shōshun in KSBD, vol. 3, index, p. 27.

²⁹ KSBD, vol. 1, pp. 273–76; ZGD, p. 298a; NBYJ, pp. 790b–91a.

³⁰ KSBD, vol. 3, pp. 182–90; ZGD, p. 656d; NBYJ, pp. 749b–50a. The reading of his surname is wrongly given as “Mon'eki” in ZGD; I followed NBYJ.

³¹ KSBD, vol. 3, pp. 90–91; ZGD, p. 656a.

³² KSBD, vol. 1, pp. 279–82; ZGD, p. 767a.

³³ KSBD, vol. 1, pp. 286–88; ZGD, p. 456c; NBYJ, p. 195a.

³⁴ KSBD, vol. 1, pp. 282–83; ZGD, p. 772b. The character 臚 used in KSBD and in subsequent publications is apparently a deviant form for 臚. I therefore chose the latter.

³⁵ KSBD, vol. 3, pp. 128–36; ZGD, p. 323b.

³⁶ KSBD, vol. 1, p. 270–71; ZGD, p. 502c–d; NBYJ, p. 61a; MZS pp. 25–45 (dates wrongly given here as 1809–1883).

³⁷ KSBD, vol. 3, pp. 222–25; ZGD, p. 822c.

³⁸ KSBD, vol. 3, pp. 160–71; ZGD, p. 5d.

contact with teachers who were active in Kamakura, such as Kōsen Sōon 洪川宗温 (Imakita 今北 1816–1892).³⁹ Was this due only to circumstances, or did Nantenbō have a distaste for the Engaku-ji style?

Skepticism Concerning the Kamakura teachers

It is difficult to assess his appraisal, but there are a few allusions that reveal Nantenbō's skepticism concerning the Kamakura teachers. One of them explicitly mentions by name two successors of Kōsen's line. Nantenbō recalls a trip to Akita Prefecture, where he was invited to give a lecture (*teishō* 提唱) by a Zen group called Yuima-e 維摩会:

Until now Shaku Sōen 釈宗演, Shaku Sōkatsu 釈宗活, and Kōno Mukai 河野霧海 had been coming alternately in autumn and in spring, but they only gave their *teishō* and there was no zazen at all. Therefore, I heard that when the *teishō* was over the people started playing go and [engaging in] other [distractions].⁴⁰

The criticism is courteous, but it reflects a frequent complaint Nantenbō expresses when mentioning the tendency to indulge in “rationalized Zen” (*rikutsu Zen* 理窟禪) (NAKAHARA 1984, pp. 52 and 265). Another piece of indirect evidence concerning the contrast between Nantenbō's style and the style of the Engaku-ji line is provided by the contacts Nantenbō had with the feminist pioneer Hiratsuka Raichō 平塚らいてう (1886–1971).

Hiratsuka Raichō

Like many inquisitive teenagers, Raichō was tormented by philosophical questions. Her doubts were fueled by articles she had read on Christian theology,⁴¹ but her interest for Zen practice arose when she came across the *Zenkai ichiran* 禅海一瀾 of Kōsen Sōon (HIRATSUKA 1992, vol. 1, p. 192). In the summer of 1905 Raichō began consulting Tettō Sōkatsu 轡翁宗活

³⁹ On this figure see SUZUKI 1992 and SAWADA ANDERSON 1994.

⁴⁰ NAKAHARA (1916.10, p. 264). The three priests mentioned are Kōgaku Sōen, Kōgaku's disciple Tettō Sōkatsu, and Mukai Koryō 霧海古亮 (Kōno 河野, 1864–1935).

⁴¹ Raichō reports having been particularly moved by an article of Tsunajima Ryōsen 網島梁川 (1873–1907) called “Yo ga kenshin no jikken” 予が見神の実験 (My experiment of seeing God), which describes the necessity of undergoing a transformation going beyond mere intellection (HIRATSUKA 1992, vol. 1, p. 190).

(Shaku 釈, 1870–1954). She attended assiduously his Ryōmō-an 兩忘庵 in Nippori and received the kōan “[Show me] your original face before your parents were born” (ibid. p. 194).

The next year, during an unidentified *sesshin*, she reports feeling suddenly “enormous teardrops falling onto my knees” while reciting Hakuin’s *Zazenwasan* (Song of zazen). As she was not in any emotional state of sadness or gratefulness, she identifies this event as being “probably an explosion of the life that was in me” (ibid. p. 209). Her first *kenshō* was acknowledged by Sōkatsu in the summer 1906, and he gave her the Buddhist name Ekun 慧薰 (ibid. p. 210). Although she kept consulting Sōkatsu during the following period, he soon told her that he would go to spread the Dharma in the United States with a group of disciples. This is the famous trip that brought Sōkatsu to San Francisco in September 1906, accompanied by Zuigan Sōseki 瑞巖宗碩 (Gotō 後藤, 1879–1965), Sōshin Shigetsu 宗岑指月 (Sasaki 佐々木 1882–1945) and Shigetsu’s first wife Tomoko.⁴²

Raichō recalls how deeply shocked she was to be separated from her master, and how Sōkatsu recommended that she not follow another teacher during his absence (ibid. p. 221). Her thirst for furthering her practice was pressing, however, so she started to do *sanzen* under Shinjō Sōsen 真浄宗詮 (Sakagami 坂上 1842–1914), the abbot of Seiken-ji 清見寺 in Okitsu 興津 (Shizuoka Prefecture), who was regularly coming to Tokyo to lecture. A group of lay practitioners called the Nyoi-dan 如意団 invited Shinjō every month to direct a *sesshin* organized at Kaizen-ji 海禅寺 (in Asakusa), where Raichō would sit.

Raichō’s subsequent years were marked by two affairs with men, culminating in March 1908 when she ran away with one of her university teachers, Morita Sōhei 森田草平 (1881–1949). This event, called the “Shiobara incident” (Shiobara jiken 塩原事件), was much exploited by the press, and the whole Hiratsuka family had to endure the consequences of this “scandal,” which became the talk of the town and gave birth to Morita’s novel *Baien* 煤煙 (Soot and smoke).

Partly to escape the curiosity of journalists, Raichō lived for a while in Kamakura and in Nagano Prefecture, where her practice remained intensive. During her stay in Kamakura she lived in a small hermitage within the precincts of Engaku-ji, but she describes Kōgaku Sōen’s successor as chief abbot, Kannō Sōkai 函応宗海 (Miyaji 宮路 1856–1923), as “absolutely un-

⁴² The American side of the story is related by Sōshin Shigetsu himself (THE FIRST ZEN INSTITUTE OF AMERICA 1947, pp. 19, 23), a narration taken up by FIELDS (1992, pp. 174–77).

attractive” and she did not feel like doing *sanzen* under his direction (ibid. p. 274).

The most interesting development for our discussion comes when she returns to Tokyo in the winter of 1908. Having heard that Nantenbō was coming every month to the Nihon Zengakudō 日本禅学堂 in Kanda to conduct *sesshin*, she started practicing *sanzen* with him. During their first meeting in the *sanzen* room, Nantenbō abruptly asked her: “What did you understand by practicing Kamakura Zen? You probably didn’t understand anything at all. If your master has been indulgent with you and if you therefore believe you have really got *kenshō* it is a big mistake.” Raichō recounts being unable to understand why Nantenbō was so aggressive toward her former Engaku-ji teachers. She conjectured that Nantenbō might have meant it to encourage her to return to her beginner’s mind, and to devote herself to practice with renewed energy (ibid. pp. 289–90).

In December 1909 Raichō went to Nantenbō’s temple, Kaisei-ji 海清寺 in Nishinomiya, to participate in the *rōhatsu sesshin*. During this intense week of training she passed through the *kōan mu*, and received from Nantenbō the new name of Zenmyō 全明 (ibid. pp. 294). This name is a combination of Nantenbō’s ordination name Zenchū 全忠 with the Sino-Japanese reading of Raichō’s first name Haru 明.⁴³ The formal attribution of this name by Nantenbō indicates his full recognition of Raichō’s accomplishments.

Nantenbō’s choice of a different style

From these few bits of evidence, it is difficult to draw any definite conclusions about Nantenbō’s evaluation of Shaku Sōkatsu’s teaching, but at the least it seems that Nantenbō’s requirements for his disciples were different from those of his colleagues in the Kantō area. Regionalism is also an element that cannot be entirely disregarded. Alluding to people who misunderstood his intentions, Nantenbō once fulminated:

Natives of Tokyo breathe hard through their nose [i.e., are arrogant], but there is nothing settled below the navel [i.e., they have not developed their energy in the *hara*, they have no firm resolve, no guts]. (NAKAHARA 1984, p. 193)

⁴³ Raichō is a pseudonym coming from the mountain bird *raichō* 雷鳥, the rock ptarmigan or *Lagopus mutus*.

Nantenbō underscores that he has not the slightest intent to “praise himself while rejecting others” (*jisan taki* 自賛他毀),⁴⁴ and he appears to have been aware of people who disagreed with his frequent invectives against “fake Zen.” After this preliminary precaution, he declares:

When I look at people who come to do *sanzen* at my place and say that they used to go to Kamakura, they all interpret *kōans*, saying whose *teishō* are better, whose *sanzen* is better, and they put on airs pretending to be awakened (*satotta furi o suru* 悟ったふりをする) just by receiving *kōans* or listening to *teishō*. (NAKAHARA 1984, p. 194)

Nantenbō confesses that he disliked giving *teishō*, and gave more importance to personal consultation (*sanzen*) (ibid. pp. 134–35). Speaking of those who indulge in stereotyped lectures, he plays upon the word *teishō* 提唱 by describing it as the behavior of people “who pursue traces of hooves and speak about it” (*teishō* 蹄唱). It is in this ironical context that he mentions Kōsen and Sōen by name. He adds that each oral performance, be it *teishō* or theater, has a distinctive “tone” (*hari* 張り) in its voicing. The tone found around Kamakura, he says, “must be Kōsen’s or Sōen’s” (NAKAHARA 1984, pp. 320–21). This statement is probably to be taken as a criticism aimed not so much at Kōsen and Sōen themselves, but rather at their successors and emulators.

Nantenbō also criticizes Sōen’s preaching, commenting that “he goes around teaching, but one can only wonder about the results. It is probably much effort to no avail” (NAKAHARA 1985, p. 74). Nantenbō goes on to say that it is more useful to “convert foreigners with capacities for the small vehicle, such as the Russells” (ibid., p. 74). He also derides Sōen’s participation at the World Parliament of Religions, suggesting that he went there in search of fame (ibid., p. 75).

The skeptical attitude of Nantenbō toward teachers from the Engaku-ji line could, however, be considered as a choice of style and should be put in relative perspective. Coming from the countryside, Nantenbō was obviously suspicious of the intelligentsia linked with the Kamakura-based temples, and his standpoint might even be understood in terms of a kind of inferiority complex, but there is at least one facet of his behavior that reveals his respect for Sōen. According to Raichō, Nakahara Shūgaku 中原秀岳 (n.d.), the abbot of Kaizen-ji (see above p. 72), was adopted and ordained by Nantenbō while

⁴⁴ This expression refers to the seventh of the ten cardinal precepts (*jūjūkinkai* 十重禁戒) listed in the *Fanwang jing* 梵網經 (T. 24 no. 1484, p. 1004c19).

he was residing at Zuigan-ji. Nantenbō, however, chose to send him to Engaku-ji and entrusted him to Sōen. Shūgaku is even reported as having obtained Sōen's *inka* (HIRATSUKA 1992 vol. 1, pp. 233, 290). Here, Hiratsuka may have overestimated the status of Shūgaku, or taken his certification in the temple lineage of Kaizen-ji for a full spiritual transmission, as one cannot find mention of Shūgaku among Sōen's successors (TAMAMURA and INOUE 1964, p. 727).⁴⁵ Aside from this reservation, Raichō was certainly well informed, as she and Shūgaku were intimate friends and he became her first lover (HIRATSUKA 1992, vol. 1, p. 312).

As it can be surmised by the above excerpts and the implicit competition with Kamakura Zen, Nantenbō was not really a champion of diplomacy; he apparently preferred to adopt a provocative attitude, striking first with his stick to see the reaction. This, however, should not be interpreted as pure rudeness, as it appears for example in the detailed requirements for Nantenbō's reform project presented below.

Nantenbō's 1893 reform project

Nantenbō obviously did not hit all of a sudden upon the idea of reforming his school. After consulting the above-mentioned twenty-four teachers when he was a monk and receiving the certification from his master, he resolved again to go around the monasteries scattered throughout the country, this time to check his fellow masters. He reports leaving for such a trip on three occasions, in 1874 (age 36), in 1876 (age 38), and in August 1917 (age 79). The purpose of these trips, he says, was not to measure his own superiority or inferiority compared to others; rather he went because he "could really not stand the sadness of [witnessing] the decline of the great Dharma" (NAKAHARA 1984, p. 149).

The origins of this initiative can in fact be located a little earlier and go back to November 1872, when he was asked by the Myōshin-ji and Daitoku-ji authorities to review the sermons given by priests in the temples along the Tōkaidō road. During this trip of inspection Nantenbō was accompanied by Gōten Dōkai, a teacher he had consulted before. At that time, all priests had

⁴⁵ Another reason for the conspicuous absence of Shūgaku in the Dharma charts of Engaku-ji might simply be, as Sōshin Shigetsu puts it, the fact that "thirteen of the nine hundred [disciples of Sōkatsu] had completed the training, but of these thirteen only four had really penetrated to the core of Zen. These four he had ordained as teachers" (THE FIRST ZEN INSTITUTE OF AMERICA 1947, p. 23).

been ordered to preach and were treated by the government as teachers (*kyōdōshoku* 教導職), classified into fourteen categories. The mission of this trip was to determine into which category each priest would be classified. This had to be done in the name of “propagating the Great Teaching” (*daikyō senpu* 大教宣布) for the diffusion of State Shinto ideas (*ibid.* pp. 138–39).

If we now turn to the 1893 project itself, Nantenbō describes it as the fruit of thirty years of labor and as the result of his reaction to the degenerating conditions of monastic life. “Since the demise of Hakuin each year passing has seen a degradation of the true style of the patriarchs; all monasteries are getting to the bottom of desolation” (*ibid.* p. 159). Consequently, he resolved to accomplish a “great revolution” in the world of his school, similar to the political revolution achieved by the Restoration. Nantenbō consulted his acquaintances among the other *rōshi* to determine which articles would be included in the actual examination. After entrusting him with the responsibility of choosing the most appropriate items, they apparently revised the final draft. According to Nantenbō, the six masters involved in this draft were Tankai Genshō, Mugaku Bun’eki, Kazan Zenryō 伽山全楞 (Kōno 河野 1824–1893), Dokuon Jōshu 独園承珠 (Ogino 荻野 1819–1895), Tekisui Giboku 滴水宜牧 (Yuri 由理 1822–1899), and Chōsō Genkai 釣叟玄海 (Yūkō 雄香 1830–1903) (*ibid.* pp. 259, 263).

Everything seemed ready for presenting the proposal. However, Nantenbō took one more verbal precaution before disclosing the items that were included in the examination, specifying that “when [kōans are] enumerated like this, people may misunderstand Zen as a kind of erudition, but it has nothing to do with that” (*ibid.* p. 160).

Let us now look at the outline of the project, entitled *Shiken hisho—Shūshō to shōsuru zenjigata shiken hyōdai jūni ka jō* 試験祕書宗匠ト唱スル禪師方試験表題拾ニヶ條 (Confidential examination text: Twelve headings for the examination of the Zen teachers who claim to be masters in our school).⁴⁶ Important to note is the fact that the examination text was to be burned once the examination had been completed. I list below only the twelve headings of the project, without the appendices published in NAKAHARA 1984 (p. 263).

1. Master Hakuin’s “eight kōans difficult to penetrate” (*Hakuin oshō hachi nantō* 白隱和尚八難透)

⁴⁶ The text is reproduced in AKIZUKI (1979, pp. 254–94). For some reason, one part has been intentionally omitted by Akizuki (on page 282), and I hope to be able once to consult the original, presently at Kaisei-ji.

2. The *Sayings of Linji* (*Rinzairoku* 臨濟錄)
3. Chan Master Fenyang's *Ten Wisdoms [expressing the] Same Truth* (*Funnyō zenji jitchi dōshin* 汾陽禪師十智同真)
4. Shoushan's *Verses on the Essential Principles* (*Shuzan kōjū no ge* 首山綱宗偈)
5. The hidden melody of the ten cardinal precepts (*Jūjūkin no hikyoku* 十重禁秘曲)
6. Composition of verses on the essential principles of the ten cardinal precepts (*Jūjūkin kōjū no ge o amu* 十重禁綱宗偈ヲ篇ム)
7. The formless, the mind-ground, and the substance of the precepts, by the grand master Bodhidharma (*Daruma daishi no musō shinchi kaitai* 達磨大師無相心地戒体)
8. Xutang's substitute and separate teachings (*Kidō no dai betsu* 虛堂代別)
9. The verses on the boundless wind and moon related to the *Biyānlū* (*Hekigan muhen fūgetsu no ju* 碧巖無辺風月の頌)
10. The hidden keys to the five positions (*Goi no hiketsu* 五位秘訣)
11. The last barricade (*Matsugo no rōkan* 末後牢關)
12. The ultimate conclusion (*Saigo no ikketsu* 最後一訣).⁴⁷

This gives an idea of the requirements devised by Nantenbō to raise the standards expected from a Rinzaï teacher. It should nevertheless be noted that these kōans represent the essential requirements expected from a rōshi anyway, and do not constitute something especially difficult for someone who would have passed through the entire *sanzen* process. Despite this detailed curriculum, Nantenbō further insists on the importance of the first breakthrough: “However, if the initial breach into the *mu* [kōan] is truly accomplished, [the other kōans] will be passed fluently at a stretch” (NAKAHARA 1984, p. 264).

When the crucial day arrived Nantenbō vigorously defended his proposal in front of the Myōshin-ji assembly, with Kyōdō Etan as chief abbot (*kanchō*), but he did not get the slightest reaction from the participants: “Not a single person proffered a word of approval or disapproval.” In fact, as Nantenbō puts it, the executives had their intentions. They would simply take no account of the proposal, since tacit approval in such a conference would imply no coercive force. Nantenbō, the six rōshi who had supported him, and even the *kanchō*, who was in favor of the proposal had been imposed upon.

⁴⁷ This follows the headings of AKIZUKI (1979, pp. 254–94). The headings differ slightly from those found in NAKAHARA (1984, p. 260–63), despite the fact that the editor is the same.

Nantenbō's disappointment and humiliation was considerable, and this event had the result of heightening his resolve to concentrate more on laypeople than on fellow priests:

Therefore, I (understood that) trying to remodel the present Zen masters who were so rotten (*konnani kusatta gendai no shūshi domo* こんなに腐った現代の宗師ども) would definitely be a lot of trouble for nothing and that it would prove totally ineffective. . . . This is why I decided that, given the state of things, I would rather train lay men or lay women among the population, and produce powerful men and women who could protect the Dharma. (NAKAHARA 1984, p. 266)

The commitment of Nantenbō and his emphasis on training laypeople also reveals his feelings for his country, a facet that deserves to be examined.

The Nationalist Dimension

There are numerous passages in Nantenbō's writings that leave little doubt as to his patriotic feelings and his reverence for the emperor. His family background as the son of a samurai apparently contributed to his identification with the military caste, and his fighting abilities gained him early respect.

For instance, during his thirties, after his first nomination in 1869 as abbot of Daijō-ji 大戒寺 in Tokuyama 徳山 (Yamaguchi Prefecture), the turmoil of the Restoration had still not abated and armed groups were scouring the region. Nantenbō mentions in particular the name of Dairaku Gentarō 大楽源太郎 (1834–1871), a warrior who had not recognized the new government and was killed shortly afterwards. In 1871 this threat drove the civilians of Tokuyama to constitute a heterogeneous defense force, comprising priests from both the Rinzai and Sōtō schools, doctors, Shintō priests, and Confucian scholars. Nantenbō was at the head of the troops, training them in the arts of the sword, the spear, and the bow, for the sake of the “emperor and the nation” (*kunkoku no tame* 君国のため) (NAKAHARA 1984, pp. 130–31).

Describing the confusion that occurred during the first years of the Restoration, Nantenbō speaks of the sudden privilege given to Shinto beliefs that were imposed on Buddhist temples, but to his eyes the court was not responsible: “In those days [people] misunderstood the rejection of Buddhism as being the opinion of the court, and it was really a difficult time.” Adding that in such a situation the role of a Zen priest is to work even

harder, he comments on the reason for his efforts, a task that consisted at that time of convincing Ian Soken to accept charge of Enpuku-ji: "It is because Zen is the root of the imperial way (*kōdō no kongen* 皇道の根源), the entire depository of Buddhism (*buppō no sōfu* 仏法の総府),⁴⁸ the source of all things; if it were to disappear, the nation and mankind would disappear" (NAKAHARA 1984, pp. 122–23).

Nevertheless, Nantenbō faced a Rinzai school that was on the point of collapsing, and he considered himself to be invested with a mission to reestablish what he calls "the crumbling Zen of the early Meiji" (*Meiji shonen no daitōzen* 明治初年の大倒禪) (ibid. p. 159). Another cause of indignation for Nantenbō was the Meiji infatuation for things foreign. "Since the people in the government of that time gave little thought to the fact that they were living in their own country, they were deluded by foreigners" (ibid. p. 167).

Speaking more precisely about his state of mind when he established Dōrin-ji in Tokyo with the help of Yamaoka Tesshū, Nantenbō adds: "We practiced zazen and trained our spirit (*seishin* 精神), and we tried to resist (*taikō* 対抗) the Western culture (*seiyō no bunmei* 西洋の文明) that would inevitably be coming" (ibid. p. 212).

As a last example of the mood expressed by Nantenbō, I should mention this passage related to his reflections around 1889 when he was struggling to establish a practicing *dōjō* in Tokyo: "Monks too are important, but if one does not first take care of laypeople among civilians and strengthen Japan with Zen, in the case of a crisis leading to war with foreign countries, from the point of view of the number of citizens, economical force, and also from the point of view of our physical size, Japan will lose against the white hairy foreigners (*ketō* 毛唐)" (ibid. p. 248).

It must be remembered that this discourse takes place in the period preceding the Sino-Japanese and the Russo-Japanese conflicts, a time when the general atmosphere was still dominated by a lack of confidence. Yet it is discomfiting to see such language, for it prefigures the militaristic rhetoric that led to the Pacific War.

I shall not, of course, attempt to justify Nantenbō's declarations, which speak for themselves. But there is a question that cannot be avoided at this point: Is it possible to identify in Japan at the end of the nineteenth century

⁴⁸ This expression is used in Dōgen's *Hōkyōki* 宝慶記, where Dōgen's master Tiantong Rujing 天童如淨 (1162–1227) is described as "the entire depository [sum] of the Buddha Dharma" (IKEDA, ed. 1994, pp. 43, 45, 157). The translation of *sōfu* as "chief prefect" may be a bit too literal (WADDELL 1977, 130).

a coherent political discourse that did *not* support the imperial system, except for those that urged a return to the Bakufu? I cannot elaborate on this issue here, but the Japanese Socialist Party (Tōyō Shakaitō 東洋社会党 founded by Tarui Tōkichi 樽井藤吉 [1850–1922]), was founded in 1882. One of the surprising features of this event is the role played by Buddhist thought in the formation of this party (TAMAMURO 1967, p. 332). Some early alternatives then existed, even though they probably supported another vision of nationalism.

To go back to Nantenbō's declarations: when he speaks, for instance, of "the Japanese spirit" (*yamato damashii*), this word instantly evokes dark associations with the military dictatorship of the Shōwa era. But for a person raised during the Tokugawa period and steeped in the principles of *bushidō*, however, it was probably as ordinary as the phrases "the American spirit" or "*l'esprit français*" in today's world. To give a provisional conclusion to this delicate question of the nativist dimension, I think that more epistemological reflection is necessary before calling Nantenbō "a staunch nationalist and partisan to the Japanese military" (SHARF 1993, p. 11–12). The whole issue is too important to be treated hastily.

Nantenbō's View of Lay Practice

Nantenbō's teaching activity had an enduring influence on monks as well as on laypeople, and he claimed to have had 3,000 spiritual descendants.⁴⁹ We have seen that his decision to put more emphasis on the training of lay practitioners was related to the failure of his 1893 proposal. Another painful episode was his eviction from Zuigan-ji 瑞巖寺 in Sendai, where he had resided as abbot between 1891 and 1896. The incident that caused his eviction was minor; an apprentice had accidentally burned part of the wooden statue representing Date Masamune 伊達政宗 (1567–1636), the patron and founder of the temple, while Nantenbō was absent.⁵⁰ This was, however, a perfect pretext for those who resented Nantenbō.

Nantenbō consequently retired to Daibai-ji 大梅寺, also in Sendai, a temple known for its poverty. It is during this period that Natsume Sōseki 夏目漱石 (1867–1916) is reported to have visited Nantenbō,⁵¹ but there is no account of this in Nantenbō's records. The famous picture showing

⁴⁹ NAKAHARA 1984, p. 51. On this, see also KASUMI 1963, p. 287.

⁵⁰ ZUIGAN-JI HAKUBUTSUKAN 1986, pp. 16–17; NAKAHARA 1984, p. 270–71.

⁵¹ ZUIGAN-JI HAKUBUTSUKAN 1986, p. 17. *Sōseki zenshū*, vol. 14, p. 61.

Nantenbō, arms folded behind a group of young men, standing with his disciple, the future general Nogi Maresuke 乃木希典 (1848–1912) was taken at Daibai-ji around the same time.⁵² Nogi had just been ordered to Taiwan and wanted this souvenir picture before departing. The master-disciple relationship between the two men lasted until Nogi's much publicized suicide after the death of the Meiji emperor. Nogi's practice had not been limited to a superficial acquaintance with zazen, an accomplishment acknowledged by Nantenbō.⁵³ The status of Nogi as one of his "successors in the Dharma" is even duly published in *Kinsei zenrin sōbōden*, where Nogi's religious name Sekishō koji 石樵居士 is listed first among Nantenbō's lay disciples (OGINO 1973, vol. 3, p. 503). This facet of Nogi's personality is, intentionally or not, completely ignored by the military "historian" MATSUSHITA Yoshio in his biography (1960).

There were several other high-ranking military men who practiced under Nantenbō, among whom was the general Kodama Gentarō 児玉源太郎 (1852–1906), who first introduced Nogi to Nantenbō. The *sanzen* scene where Kodama asked Nantenbō "How should a military man handle (*atsukau* 扱う) Zen?" was for him memorable. Nantenbō asked him to show how he would handle three thousand soldiers right now. As Kodama argued that he did not have any soldiers to whom he could give orders, Nantenbō pushed him further: "This should be obvious to you... You fake soldier!" Upset, Kodama replied: "How would *you* do it then?" Upon this, Nantenbō threw Kodama to the ground and jumped on his back, slapping his buttock with the *nanten* stick and shouting, "Troops, forward march!" (NAKAHARA 1984, pp. 205–208).

This ludicrous episode did not, however, receive a positive reaction from all of Nantenbō's contemporaries. Inoue Shūten 井上秀天 (1880–1945), a former Sōtō priest who turned to writing harsh criticism of the Zen masters of his time, takes this episode as an example of what he calls "the bluffing Zen of Nantenbō" (*Nantenbō no hattari zen* 南天棒のハッタリ禅). For Shūten, "Indulging in this type of childish behavior and pretending it to be 'a living resource of Zen' is definitely irresponsible" (SAHASHI 1982, p. 95). In short, Shūten considered that the Meiji masters did not even approach the level of the ancient Chinese masters, and that their sayings and writings only revealed their hypocrisy. In his critiques, generally not very constructive, he took Kōgaku Sōen and Nantenbō as his two main targets.

⁵² KASUMI 1963, p. 169; ZUIGAN-JI HAKUBUTSUKAN 1986, p. 21.

⁵³ NAKAHARA 1984, pp. 242–43.

There are a few passages in Nantenbō's own writings that suggest the superiority of ordained individuals over laypeople, in particular when he mentions the strength of the resolve demanded of monks as they beg to be accepted into a monastery (NAKAHARA 1984, p. 31). Acknowledging that monks and laypeople have to be treated differently, Nantenbō nevertheless deployed tireless energy in monitoring several zazen lay groups throughout the country. This type of activity started in 1902, when he accepted the invitation by a group called Anjin-kai 安心会 to go to his native region of Saga and conduct a *sesshin*.⁵⁴

Another of Nantenbō's foremost lay disciples was the former doctor Daiken Tōin 大顕權隱 (Iida Masakuma 飯田政熊 1863–1937). Their first meeting took place during the night of 2 December 1889. Daiken had experienced a massive breakthrough and was eager to confirm his understanding with a master as soon as possible. His understanding was acknowledged as genuine, but Nantenbō pressed the newcomer to further refine and deepen his training. He finally gave him his recognition (*inka*) in 1898 (NAKAHARA 1984, pp. 244–45).

Daiken was the first layperson to undergo the whole training process under Nantenbō's stern fist, and he later had a considerable following during the Taishō and Shōwa periods. Some of his vigorous *teishō* have been recorded, and even now these texts are considered among the best commentaries of Zen classics and kōan training from the point of view of a practitioner.⁵⁵ In 1922, however, Daiken Tōin chose to become a priest under Taiun Sogaku 大雲祖岳 (Harada 原田 1871–1961), becoming his Dharma successor and contributing to the success of the Rinzai-flavored Sōtō lineage that still flourishes at Hosshin-ji 発心寺 in Obama.⁵⁶

There are hundreds of other disciples who cannot be mentioned here, but if we try to summarize the singularity of Nantenbō's style, in particular when he dealt with laypeople, a few features can be highlighted. First, he conceived of himself as a reformer who tried to emulate the work done by Hakuin⁵⁷; he did not pretend to bring new elements to the Rinzai tradition. Second, his requirements for laypersons were in no way less severe than those for monks, since he placed a lot of hope in the future of lay Zen. The example of Yamaoka Tesshū is eloquent; he had already received in 1880 a certification

⁵⁴ NAKAHARA 1984, pp. 280–81.

⁵⁵ See in particular IIDA 1934, 1943, and 1954.

⁵⁶ ZGD, p. 19a–b.

⁵⁷ NAKAHARA 1984, p. 159.

from Tekisui Giboku when he met Nantenbō.⁵⁸ Nantenbō pushed him to go further. A third characteristic is Nantenbō's attitude toward historical changes: he apparently did not make any effort to adapt Zen practice to the times other than to withstand what he considered superficial vogues. The inner dimension was given priority and his disregard of tactical considerations or compromises probably helped cause the humiliations he experienced with his 1893 proposal and while he was abbot of the Zuigan-ji.

Conclusions

It appears from our short review of Nantenbō's life and activities that he essentially remained a man of the Tokugawa period. Forced by the circumstances of the Restoration to recognize the degenerating state of his school, he tried to maintain the fundamentals of practice by straightening out his fellow teachers and by training laypeople. His sources of inspiration were taken from the past and, when he had to interact with a society in transformation, he did not always evaluate adequately the extent of the changes that had occurred. His own samurai background, plus the fact that several of his lay disciples (Yamaoka, Nogi, Iida) were in relatively privileged economic situations, may have contributed to his conservative vision of society.

The comparison with other teachers of the Rinzai school shows important differences in style, and Nantenbō seems to have been more demanding of laypeople than were most of the other masters of the same period. An additional feature, which could not be discussed here, is his rejection of scholarly study and unilateral emphasis on training. Although, for the sake of simplicity, I have briefly mentioned tensions between Nantenbō and teachers from the Engaku-ji line, I do not mean to indicate that the Rinzai school at that time was dominated by these two lines. There were other significant trends, such as those represented by the Bizen Branch (Bizen-ha 備前派)⁵⁹ and the Mino Branch (Mino-ha 美濃派), and the difference in style among the various monasteries survive to the present.⁶⁰

The complexity of these various tendencies should not prevent us from

⁵⁸ ŌMORI 1983 p. 222, NAKAHARA 1984, pp. 190–91.

⁵⁹ The Meiji-period Engaku-ji line was linked with the Bizen Branch, through Gisan Zenrai 儀山善来 (1802–1878) and his successor Kōgaku Sōon.

⁶⁰ This is illustrated by, for example, the rather unknown line of Tōjū Reisō 洞宗令聡 (Itō 伊藤 1854–1916), belonging to the Mino Branch, which stands in contrast to the more famous Bizen Branch, both belonging to the line of Inzan. This lineage is discussed by KATŌ (1981).

outlining general developments. Attempts to resist the growing influence of Christian movements was a necessity for all Buddhist sects, and broadening the basis of lay practice was another specific way to react against the sluggishness of the Buddhist clergy. This policy was obviously shared with the Engaku line.

In the case of Nantenbō, the inconveniences presented by the other consequences of modernization often seemed to outweigh its advantages, a perception that was not entirely devoid of lucidity. When he spoke of trying to “resist the Western culture that would inevitably be coming,” he expresses his sense of a crisis that began to unfold in front of his eyes. In other words he seems to have been highly aware of the illusory nature of what the Meiji propaganda depicted as “progress.” Concerning tradition, the damage had already occurred during the first years of Meiji, and the emphasis on lay practice was one of the few options left in the hope of securing the survival of the Dharma.

Although he had trained many disciples, when Nantenbō died on 12 July 1925 he left only a few successors. They included in particular the main line of Kikusen Sōkyō 菊僊宗匡 (Shimada 島田 1872–1959), who became the chief abbot of Nanzen-ji.⁶¹ This line has not survived to the present. Nantenbō’s style appears to have been barely preserved through Kōin Jiteki 高隱慈的 (Moriuchi 守内 1866–1909)⁶² and Sōhan Genpō 宗般玄芳 (Okuda 奥田 1848–1922),⁶³ who had received his *inka* but later chose to be affiliated to another master.⁶⁴

Genpō transmitted this tradition to Tessō Chishō 徹宗智性 (Kōzuki 神月 1879–1937),⁶⁵ who handed it to Kanjū Sōjun 寛州宗潤 (Izawa 井沢 1895–1954).⁶⁶ Today, Genpō’s descendant in the third generation, Kasumi Bunshō 春見文勝, the abbot of Kaisei-ji who reached the venerable age of ninety in 1995, and his own disciples are the few representatives of Nantenbō’s legacy. Like other oral traditions, but especially since Meiji, the different branches

⁶¹ See *Zenbunka* 154 (1994): 148.

⁶² KSBD, vol. 3, pp. 301–71; ZGD, p. 5d.

⁶³ KSBD, vol. 3, pp. 470–73; ZGD, p. 128d.

⁶⁴ KSBD, vol. 3, p. 503. Genpō’s biography mentions the fact that “he received Tōjū’s [Nantenbō] certification at Dōrin-ji, but he still was not satisfied and put it aside.” He finally returned to his former master Kazan Zenryō 伽山金榜 (Kōno 河野 1824–1893) and became his successor (KSBD, vol. 3, p. 471).

⁶⁵ ZGD, p. 319d.

⁶⁶ See *Zenbunka* 146 (1992): 149.

affiliated with the Zen denomination periodically have to face the challenge of their own extinction.

References

ABBREVIATIONS

- KSBD *Kinsei zenrin sōbōden* 近世禪林僧宝伝. Ogino.
MZS *Meiji no zenshō* 明治の禪匠. Zenbunka Henshūbu.
NBYJ *Nihon bukkyō jinmei jiten* 日本仏教人名辞典. Nihon Bukkyō Jinmei Jiten Hensan Iinkai.
ZGD *Zengaku daijiten* 禅学大辞典. Zengaku Daijiten Hensansho.

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